174 contaminated, so that the linguistic map is no longer indicative
101 of these ancient distributions.

From these facts two conclusions can definitely be drawn. The Fang population is not represented in Gabon by large homogeneous zones as in the Cameroons (where the Evondo country, the Boulou country, etc., can be clearly distinguished). The diverse Fang groups have become interdispersed and in the course of their almost incessant migrations since the second half of the eighteenth century have "digested" the foreign traits peculiar to the peoples they have met. And it is in the Lower Gabon, at the end of their journeyings that the Fang groups present a state of maximum confusion.

●162 Administrative documents permit one to get a present-day
178 picture of the distribution of the Fang, a precise picture — at least so it seems. The weakening (indeed the near disappearance) of distinctions between tribes and clans, the breaking up, the scattering, and half autonomy of the various groups, have led to the confusion of these two types of grouping and to placing them on the same plane. The administration cannot be blamed for this, for these two notions are no longer always precise in the minds of the present-day Fang. Let us discuss, first of all, the two zones by which this people reached Gabon, Woleu-N'Tem, and Ogooué-Ivindo.(2)

2. Cf. G. Balandier, Rapport préliminaire de la Mission d'information scientifique en Pays Fang [Preliminary Report of the Mission of Scientific Information on Fang Country], Brazzaville, 1949, étude mimiographiée [mimeographed study], pp. 5-10.

162 Region of the Woleu-N'Tem
361

This region presents a certain physical unity and a true ethnic unity. It is inhabited exclusively by Fang, a relatively preferable demographic situation. In 1949 there were over 71,000 inhabitants. It is surrounded only by either identical or related Fang groups; it

162 361 was explored and then occupied only at a late date. These conditions delayed "contaminations" and permitted the maintenance of a certain unity. It now has a viable economic structure, thanks to its cacao production, which has finally created a true peasant state. [79]

1. Bitam and Minvoul Districts

These two districts are wedged between the Cameroons to the north, Spanish Guinea to the west, and a true "no man's land" to the east. The inhabitants, numbering 27,500, are the most active [133 511] and prosperous elements (producing three quarters of the cacao grown in the region) on the roads serving the Cameroons and the center of Oyem. They have built modernized villages "tied" to the cacao plantations. Their inhabitants belong to groupings found in the Cameroons and in Spanish Guinea, and some of the villagers have relatives in one or the other territory — like so many links favoring traffic in "merchandise" and ideas.

619 615 According to the census of 1936, the only detailed document, 27 clans or tribal fragments (clans that have maintained the tribal name) are now there. The most numerous clan is that of the Effak [162] (Yénzòk tribe), (1) which has more than 15 percent of the population,

1. We give the tribal dependencies with all reservation. The near ignorance and "cheating" allied to the movement of clan regroupment render all certainty impossible, except when we have access to early documents, more particularly to a mention in the notes of Monsignor Martrou, which were kindly lent to us at the Libreville Mission.

followed by that of the Eba (Yémisèm tribe), which has 10 percent. The other groups may go down to a few tens of individuals. In this region are found the following tribes (ayog): Yénzòk, Yémvôg, Yémisèm. These are the most important in the Cameroons in the

619 Ebolowa and Sangmélima regions (2). The whole of Upper Woleu-
615

2. Documents relating to "ethnic groupings," Administrative Archives of Ebolowa.

N'Tem is oriented toward the Cameroons with which it has not
[439] only economic ties (it exports its cacao there and imports its goods) but also political ties (which explains why it served to relay the directives and their implementations that appeared in this territory).

2. Oyem District

162 This district, with 30,000 inhabitants, has a long frontier with
361 Spanish Guinea, and is crossed by the Woleu River, an important
439 means of access to this possession. The major part of the population (more than two thirds) is "stuck" to the frontier. This is understood because related groups exist on each side of the frontier; [80] [Fig. 1] [81] Guinea has always exerted an economic attraction (it is the center of trade and exchange of labor which is much
[433 in demand), she serves occasionally as a place of refuge. The vil-
511] lagers are fairly well-to-do because of the cacao cultivation (one fourth of the Woleu-N'Tem production) and because of the trade with Guinea (peanuts, coffee, palmetto). This is shown particularly by an improvement in housing.

162 Kyé-Nyé Canton, a meeting place of two migratory streams
619 coming from the Lower Cameroons, contains by itself nearly
615 12,000 inhabitants who again are distributed by clans (Fig. 1). The dominant groupings are the Esengi (Yémvôg tribe), who account for more than 40 percent, the Kojé for about 25 percent, and the Yéngwi for over 15 percent. In the canton of Woleu, the villages of the Ozip tribe are dominant, accounting for 33 percent of the population. Then the Bökwé (Ndôg tribe) account for about 12 percent, and the Esamökos (Yéngöl tribe) (1) for more than 10

1. Only confirmed by the notes of L. Martrou.

162 percent. Only the Koǰe (more than 90 percent of the population)
619 and the Ožip form the Canton of Oyem. In Bissok Canton, the
614 population is dominated by the Yéngwi and Yémisèm tribes, while Ellelem Canton is characterized by a sprinkling of groups: 17 clans or tribal fragments for 3,200 inhabitants, where the Bökwé (allied to the Ndôg tribe) alone assert themselves, although apparently numbering less than 25 percent.

361 Oyem District shows a great homogeneity, which is found
184 nowhere else in Fang country in Gabon. Its greater population density, its relative prosperity, the fact that it is centered on Oyem, an important administrative and market town, these facts explain the prestige it exerts on Fang villagers and its present-day political vitality.

3. Mitzic District

162 With 11,000 inhabitants belonging stricto sensu to the Fang
361 group (2) this district occupies a position which lends itself badly to

> 2. We designate as Fang the restricted whole which bears this sole name — a migratory group according to us.

the stabilization of a population. It opens on three zones of attraction: the Ogooué, the coast, and Spanish Guinea. It has played the role of thoroughfare and was profoundly disturbed during the famine years (1922-23, 1925-26). It is barely beginning to modernize its economy by the installation of cacao plantations. [82] Besides being the least populated district, it has the worst demographic situation, the lowest birth rate, and the smallest child population. Although the people have settled along the roads (as is clearly shown when present-day maps are compared to early ones), the villages have remained unstable and very small, consisting of
361 composite groupings. An investigation of 50 villages spread along
614 the two roads show that they have in their midst 30 clans or tribal
619 fragments. At the time of the recent regrouping of clans, the most

active tribes were the Yémvóg, the Yémõdâg, the Ndôg, the Yéngwi, and the Yémisèm. They are also the ones which reveal a tendency to dominate. If Mitzic could have been considered the "geographic center" of Fang country, it would be difficult now to find for it any other significance.

4. Médouneu District

Reduced to a single canton this district has less than 3,500 inhabitants It is maintained because of its position on the frontier and because of the network of tracks used by traders which run directly to Lower Gabon and Libreville. The Oyék and the Effak are the most numerous groups, making up 13 out of the 37 villages scattered throughout the district.

We have applied ourselves with great precision to this whole region not only because our investigation was carried out chiefly in the Woleu-N'Tem villages, but because it plays a primary role in the development of Gabon. Its chief town, Oyem, competes with Libreville in imposing its directives on the whole Fang country. Its richer economy and better demography (the population density is more than 6.5 inhabitants per kilometer (1) make

1. Map of Captain Roussel (completed in 1912) and surveys of itineraries in the Oyem District

it a center of vitality. Closely allied to the Cameroons (from whom it receives suggestions of policy) and opening onto Spanish Guinea, it nevertheless preserves a sense of unity and a certain special spirit.

Region of the Ogooué-Ivindo

This region has neither the ethnic unity (it is a zone of multiple contacts) nor the demographic importance (35,600 inhabitants scattered throughout three districts) of the preceding one. It is isolated and without [83] economic development; its isolation has made it a zone of refuge in a period of uncertain peace.

162 Dominated by the great and often marshy forest, this country is
361 characterized by a very localized population indicated on a map by "strips" linked to the system of rivers. In the two districts which they occupy, Booué and Makokou, the Fang are the dominating ethnic group, forming about 45 percent and 40 percent of the total population. They are in the neighborhood of ethnic groups which are considered to be related to them, the Shaké and the
[177] Bakwélé. By their migrations they have disordered the population of this region and created contacts resulting in great cultural contaminations. If one can believe Father Trilles, who noted an "archaic language" used in the legends, proverbs, and songs, and similar to Batéké, (1) the relations with the peoples of the Congo

1. Father H. Trilles, op. cit

and Gabon borders would be early.

173 According to tradition, the Fang-Maké (or Bisibé) were the first to reach the Ivindo. De Brazza finds them on the Ogooué (on
619 the island of Zabouré). Their largest tribe is Mékuk, specifically referred to by Father Trilles and specially mentioned by Tessmann on his distribution map. Outside of the Maké, the Fang of this region are in two distinct groups – Bétsi and Nzaman – the latter representing, according to early authors, the "true Pahouin of the Ogooué." (2) In Booué District the villages, although without clan

2 Cf. Captain Curault, "Monographie du secteur de N'Djolé au Gabon [Monograph on the N'Djolé section of Gabon]," Revue des Troupes Coloniales, 68, 1908.

homogeneity, showed at the time of the "regrouping movement" the predominance of the three great tribes, Yémõdâg, Yémvâg, and Yémisèm.

511 The Ogooué-Ivindo seems to be one of the poorest regions of
702 Gabon. Not having any economic equipment, it was only precariously active during the war effort. On the other hand, frequent recruiting has seriously affected this country (which along with

511 N'Gounié and Woleu-N'Tem was a "reservoir of manpower") by
702 upsetting its demographic equilibrium. Consequently, most of the administrative reports stress the poverty and mediocrity of the villages, the political instability and "indiscipline," and the eagerness with which all innovations are greeted in the hope of improving conditions. [84]

Region of the Maritime Ogooué

175 During the second half of the nineteenth century the Fang descended the Ogooué in order to reach the trading centers established on the river, and the counting houses of the coast. They pushed back the Bakèlè, imposed themselves on the Galwa and the Nkomi. Since 1880 the Fang have settled in large numbers along
361 the Ogooué as a result of a penetration which organized convoys on the river, created posts, and made possible the settlement of traders.

361 The Fang are settled in the four districts forming this adminis-
●162 trative region, but in that of Ombooué, the extreme point of their advance, they represent less than 5 percent of the population. Ninety-five percent of the 9,300 inhabitants of N'Djolé District are Fang who have taken the place of the ancient Bakélé people. They belong to the Maké, Nzaman, and Bétsi groups; the first of these was located downstream from N'Djolé before 1865 (1).

1. Captain Curault, op. cit.

They came largely from the Lower Ivindo, but also from the Woleu-N'Tem, where the villagers soon sought to obtain commercial out-
[316] lets on the Ogooué. Outside of a small mine exploitation at N'Djolé, this district is extremely bare. Consequently, the very scattered villages have a miserable appearance, and the male
[164] population has been canvassed (or recruited) by the neighboring lumber works and by the coastal centers.

563 Lambaréné District, which is very important because of its
[361] forest exploitations (and also because it is an old commercial
313] center, still has a largely Fang population. These are in opposition to the aboriginal group of the Galwa (less than 2,200 individuals)

563 who, being related to the coastal minorities, constitute the "aristocratic race" of the country, and, having become relatively hierarchical, has known how to "preserve its position." (2)

2. Rapport Ogooué-Maritime [Maritime Ogooué Report], 3e trimestre [Third Quarter], 1935.

● 162 Though the Fang "have settled in a haphazard manner and a little everywhere," they have nevertheless formed two important centers of population, on the Ogooué above Lambaréné and in the area around the southern lakes. (3) They represent more than 35 percent

3 Rapport. Ogooué-Maritime [Maritime Ogooué Report], 4e trimestre [Fourth Quarter], 1935.

of the population (17,500 inhabitants) in this district of multiple ethnic groups, which in 1936 had one fifth of its inhabitants settled at the lumber works. The Fang villages here consist of 35 clans or 621 615 619 fragments, about half of the population forming a homogeneous clan, while the other [85] half is composite. Apart from the Yémvòg, most of the existing tribes are not found (or are unimportant) in the Woleu-N'Tem [region]. The most numerous elements seem to originate from the Ivindo. Although they reached the region forming the present-day district of Port-Gentil at the end of their push, the Fang have not succeeded in evicting the dominant ethnic groups, the Ouroungou and the Nkomi.

Region of the Estuary

162 We have already stated that the date of the arrival of the Fang at the Estuary can be set at 1850. At that time they replaced the residual coastal groupings, particularly the Bakélé who, after abandoning the Ogooué, had to leave the Como. Since 1900 the population of this region has been "nearly entirely composed of

162 Pahouin." (1) They occupy the districts of Kango and Cocobeach

1. Archives de Libreville [Archives of Libreville], 1900-1910.

(6,000 and 7,500 inhabitants); they represent more than 95 percent of the district of Libreville, if one discounts the foreign "workers" hired under contract. They have imposed themselves on Libreville (to the detriment of the aboriginal Mpongwé), where they form nearly 40 percent of the population and are dominant in 15 out of 23 sections of the town. This hold over the chief town of the territory is proof of their conquering activity.

361 619 In the district of Cocobeach, more than 20 clans or tribal fragments are present, especially Oyèk (a tribe found also at Médouneu and particularly in Spanish Guinea) and Effak This region, which in the past was important as a commercial center, is without any trade, and the administrative reports stress the [161] depopulation movement which is taking place. (2)

2 Cf. especially Rapport politique [Political Report] 1937, Department of the Estuary, giving a special analysis of the causes of the very high infant mortality.

162 361 619 Kango District at the tip of the Estuary is one of those where the demographic decline is the most marked. If the census of 1936 is accepted, there are 25 clans and fragments The most numerous group, that of the Yéngũ, accounts only for about 10 percent Libreville District, having incorporated the former subdivision of Chinchoua, exhibits a Fang population divided to the maximum This last region is characterized by a [86] veritable crumbling of the group. The 1943 census shows 54 clans and tribal fragments (with 3,500 inhabitants), of which only 8 contain more than 150 persons. This is also the region which has been most emptied for the benefit of the capital, where the natives of the former subdivision of Chichoua represent nearly 7 percent of the population.

162 361 614 619 In the part of the district that corresponds to the former subdivision of Libreville, the Fang group is much more homogeneous. The Oyèk are dominant with 45 percent of the villagers, then come the Ntum numbering 20 percent, and the Effak (Yénzòk tribe) with about 12 percent. Nine other groupings represent from 4 5 percent (Esisis) to 1. 5 percent (Omvâg) of the population of this former division. Like Chinchoua it has suffered under the attraction of Libreville.

361 614 If the Estuary region has been affected demographically during the last fifty years, it does not seem to have changed from the point of view of clan composition. The archives of the former Como Circle [administrative unit] (1) show that the groupings now

1. For which very precise reports were drawn up in 1905 and 1909.

considered the most important constituted villages known during the years 1900-10. However, two essential differences appear: these groupings at that time existed almost isolated and not at the level of dozens of little groups. They were localized rather definitely along the banks of the rivers, whereas they are now scattered. The villages they formed were larger than those of the present day. We have thus an indication of the process of atomization which took place during the first half of this century.

One is at first astonished at the complexity of the Fang country Outside the Upper Woleu-N'Tem, clan groupings do not appear within the limits of even small regions; they form villages which are often far apart from one another; they are scattered and intermixed. As a matter of fact, only the village grouping and the land it uses can be located on the terrain. Moreover, it is necessary to specify that the latter was stabilized, and a limit set on its mobility only at a very recent date. The fragmentation is at its maximum at the extreme end of the Fang migration, in the coastal districts and in the "zone of contact" [87] created in the surroundings of the Middle and Lower Ogaoué. An average volume by clan could be calculated for each region which would give figures between

161 attributed to the optimism of this observer who "seems to have been conservative." (3) G. Sautter thinks that such a population,

3. G. Sautter, "Essai sur le peuplement et l'habitat au Woleu-Ntem" [Essay on the Population and Habitat in Woleu-Nt'Tem], Cahiers d'Outre-Mer, 14, April-June, 1951.

"itself deficient" (for causes which appear in part of a natural order since they occur "from one end to the other of the equatorial forest bloc"), has been sorely tried by endemic diseases and famine as well as by emigration and recruiting. Stabilization, which has asserted itself during the last two decades along with the equipment and enrichment of the region, is still tenuous. Because of this G. Sautter will not risk making any forecast on the future evolution of the Woleu-N'Tem population. He recognizes that the Fang of this region are a "flourishing population when compared to their congeners of the Ivindo, the Ogooué, and the coast, who are in a far worse position."

The fragility of this equilibrium was apparent at the time of the "war effort." The political report of Woleu-N'Tem (1944) pays particular attention to the problem of depopulation. It shows [165] a large excess of deaths over births (22.1 percent versus 15.9), and it stresses the serious recrudescence of the migratory move- [167] ment — an official estimate gives 4,500 adult men (that is more than 20 percent of the adult male population) who at that time had gone to Spanish Guinea. That is to say, that the results obtained since 1930 by [our] population policy have remained eminently precarious. While still one of the most vigorous ethnic groups of Gabon, the Fang have a handicap which makes them sensitive to any critical situation, as was apparent during the last years of the war. There is no medical report that [93] still boasts, as did the early observers, of the robustness and prolicacy of the Pahouin.

● 162 With the help of precise investigations made in Woleu-N'Tem, we have been able to study the structure of the Fang population in this relatively favorable region. The most apparent fact is the

162 disproportion between the number of men and women, which becomes accentuated at the level of age groups called "adult" (according to present-day administrative census, these begin at

WOLEU-N'TEM

District of Oyem
11 villages, 1,570 inhabitants.

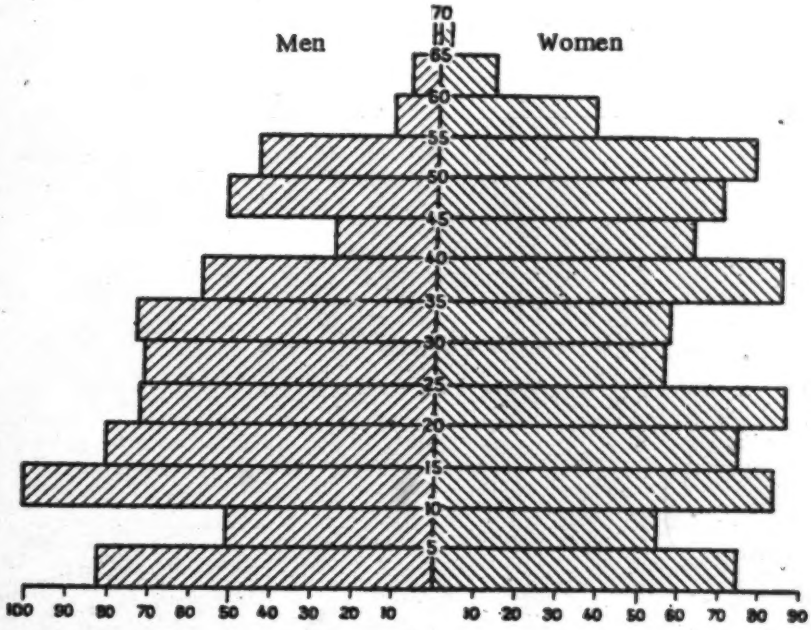


Fig. 2
Distribution by Age and by Sex.

fifteen years of age). The censuses of 1936 and of 1950 show this clearly, although there has been a reduction in the disequilibrium during the last fifteen years.

Table I

Distribution of the Sex Ratio [Woleu-N'Tem Region]

		Entire Region	Bitam-Minvoul	Oyem	Mitzic	Médouneu (1)
Number of women per 1,000 men (total population)	1936	1,283	1,170	1,239	1,241	
	1951	1,147	1,184	1,142	1,161	1,125
Number of women per 1,000 men (population called adult)	1936	1,521	1,443	1,598	1,523	
	1951	1,373	1,443	1,337	1,323	1,300

1. Médouneu did not belong administratively to the Woleu-N'Tem region in 1936.

In order to make these general indications more specific, we took the census of eleven villages in Oyem District, where we made our investigation and which have a [total] population of 1,570 inhabitants. The distribution of these by age group and by sex (Fig. 2) confirms the preceding observation. In the eleven villages there are 838 women for 732 men, that is, a ratio of 1,144, for 1.142 for the whole district. The disequilibrium between the sexes is very different according to the age considered.

Table II

Age Group	0	10	20	30	40	50	60 years
Number of women per 1,000 men	955	868	996	1,083	1,728	2,127	

●162 If one excludes the drop revealed for the group from ten to twenty years of age (which can be explained partly by mistakes in estimating ages of the women, who are usually made older by the census takers), (1) it can be seen that the number of women

> 1. The census takers simply estimate the age when the birth date is either contested or forgotten; there are practically no vital statistics recorded.

increases [95] going from one age group to the next, the increase being particularly marked over 40 years of age. One must consider first of all a higher male mortality, which is apparent by comparing the figures obtained in the census taking. Thus the census of 1936 shows a male mortality of over 60 percent of the total mortality, with a maximum of 66.6 percent in Oyem District. But this alone does not explain the disproportions observed. Keeping in mind the date of 1930 which marks the slowing up of emigration and the end of recruiting on a large scale, (1)

> 1. Cf. G. Sautter, op. cit.

one notes that the men of over twenty at this time are those who are now over forty; the deficit in men of the oldest age group represents especially those emigrants who did not return and those who died in the lumbering operations. The reduction in the disequilibrium from 1936 to 1951 tends to confirm this statement. One must also bear in mind a factor arising from the social organization. The young women (from ten to twenty years of age) are given in marriage to foreign groups before being compensated for by foreign women, [who are eventually] brought into the local group in marriage, through the brice-prices received for the former.

Dr. Le Dentu's report made it apparent that in 1936 the whole Fang nation showed an insufficient child population. The groups from zero to fifteen years amounted to 28.4 percent, while among other Gabon peoples, the Eschira for example, they represent

5: Balandier--30 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 FH9 Fang FH9

nearly 36 percent of the population. The figures furnished by the census of 1950 do not indicate any improvement, at least so far as the districts of Bitam-Minvoul and Mitzic are concerned.

Table III

District	Bitam-Minvoul	Oyem	Mitzic	Médouneu
Percentage of child population	29.3%	35.3%	25.4%	32.3%

[96] The most unfavorable situation is at Mitzic; this partially explains the loss of 2,092 inhabitants in this district from 1936 to 1940, which is more than 20 percent of its present population and about half the loss suffered by the Woleu-N'Tem region during the same period. The demographic state seems to be at its best in Oyem District. However, since 1936 the population to within a hundred units has remained merely stationary. Our investigation covering eleven villages shows to what extent this situation is affected by the changes in economic and political circumstances. The years of the war effort (1940-45) are shown by a lacuna at the level of the five- to ten-year-old group, while the return to normal conditions and the relative prosperity due to the increase in cacao production entail a broadening of the demographic base at the level of the children from zero to five years old (Fig. 2). Accurate census taking in nine villages in the neighborhood of Oyem in 1945, 1946, and 1948 show an increase from 1,090 to 1,133 inhabitants with a replacement index of 1.32. In addition, while the excess of births is only 13 units, the increase in population is 43 units. This increase implies above all a return of former emigrants.

These facts confirm the extreme demographic sensitivity and indicate the quick reaction to changes in local politics. But this sensitivity is only apparent because of a poor situation. In spite of normal fertility (the genital capacity, the mean number of

In spite of normal fertility (the genital capacity, the mean number of pregnancies in women by the time of menopause, is 4.2 for the whole district), the number of children is not sufficient because of the high infant mortality (see the following table), and also apparently because of the aging of the female population. Serious malarial diseases affecting 78 percent of the children from two to five years old are the reasons for this mortality as well as intestinal parasitosis.

[97] Table IV

(Based on the medical report of the 4th quarter of 1944)

District	Birth Rate	Rate of mortality from 0 to 1 year	Rate of infant mortality	Percentage of child population with reference to total population
Bitam	1.3%	7.1% of deaths	27% of deaths	29%
Minvoul	1.3%	7.3% of deaths	13% of deaths	25%
Oyem	1.7%	10% of deaths	26% of deaths	34%
Mitzic	0.8%	6.7% of deaths	18% of deaths	25%

These figures should be completed by stating that infant mortality which is very high from zero to one year diminishes from one to five years and drops meaningfully only from this age on. Dr. Le Dentu in 1936 gave for the whole Fang people, for each of these categories, the following percentages: 16.5 percent, 12 percent, and 8.9 percent of deaths, which indicates the catastrophic situation in certain parts of the Pahouin country

Such are the figures as they appear in the privileged region of the Woleu-N'Tem. They are still higher when the whole

162 administrative division is taken into account, especially at the end
163 of a period of crisis, as is shown by the health study of 1944, or
165 when one considers only the most restricted village groupings that are the most affected. The diagrams for the three villages of Oyem (Fig. 3) are characteristic.

However this demographic situation appears excellent when it is compared to that of the Fang of other regions. In this respect we give as an example the Fang of the Ogoué-Ivindo about whom we have information gathered during the year 1947: [98] [Fig. 3.]

[99]

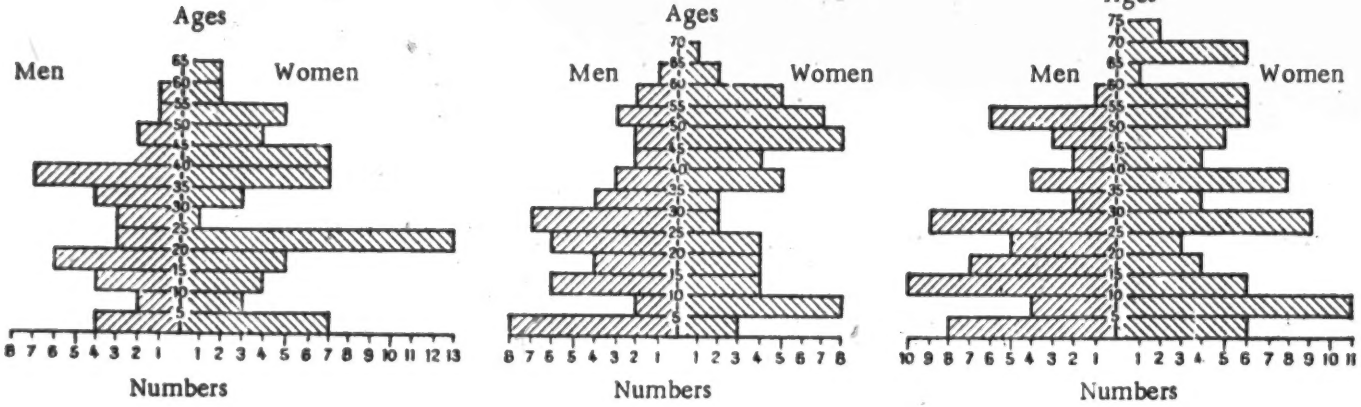
Index of replacement: 0.43.
Birth rate: 0.77 percent.
Percentage of child population: 24.7 percent.
Total mortality rate: 1.79 percent.
Infant mortality rate: 25 percent of deaths.(1)

1. Economic report of the Ogooué-Ivindo; chapter on "Demography."

163 And a slightly earlier report (1946) on the essentially Fang district of Booué shows complementary percentages which are still more significant: a genital capacity of 2.7 and for the young women a fertility rate (mean number of reported pregnancies) of 1.2, these figures being far below those obtained from the Fang of the Woleu-N'Tem. Incidentally, "35 to 40 percent of the young women remain sterile while the percentage of sterility in the older women does not exceed 8 to 12 percent." (2) The Fang

2. Population Commission, Official Report of the Meeting of August 8, 1946.

of the Ogooué-Ivindo are registered in a region where all the ethnic groups show a demographic decline and which has lost a seventh of its population from 1934 to 1947. Their situation is comparable to that of their congeners of Lower Gabon who, as Dr. Le Dentu pointed out, show a marked deficit.



Akok Village
100 inhabitants

Yosse Village
111 inhabitants

Nto Village
142 inhabitants

Fig. 3
Age Pyramids of Three Kǒjé Villages
(Villages numerically reduced)

5: Balandier--33 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 FH9 Fang FH9 [98]

● 162 We have been able to define the characteristics of this demographic crisis, of which the Fang as a whole are aware. These are a drop in the population, which is more or less checked according to the region and circumstances; a lack of balance between the number of men and of women — the sex ratio rising rapidly at the level of the oldest age groups — and a more marked aging of the feminine population; an insufficient demographic basis and at the same time a high infant mortality. And it is
168 578 the lack of children and the sudden importance acquired by women (conditioned by their number as well as by the general movement of social evolution) of which the villagers complain, far more than they criticize the inadequacy of sanitary equipment. In a society where the number [that is, the size of the groups] differentiates the groupings in a hierarchical system, and permits personal preeminence, the acute phases of this demographic crisis arouse great anxiety; the decline of fecundity in the women is one of the reasons, the most important one perhaps, for the hostility of the men toward the women.

168 The grounds given for such a situation [100] have a double aspect, modernist and traditionalist. The grounds of the former were displayed at the time of the Pahouin Congress of 1947 and also by certain groupings at the time of the movement for regrouping clans. They are expressed by definite claims, such as demanding a health program and education in hygiene, a desire to control and then limit prostitution, to consolidate the "family" by limiting divorce and curbing adultery, a need for rich crops "that can be sold in order to support the family," (1) etc. The grounds of the
168 186

1. Statement by a Dignitary of the Yémödâg Tribe, Mitzic, 1949.

traditionalists without doubt compel recognition and represent the opinion of the greatest number. They reveal a strong reaction to the present state of Fang society and a desire to return to a past when everything was better, when there were "a great many men and a great many children"; they express a tendency toward "counter-acculturation." The upheavals that have occurred in

4. Towns

361 This lack of vitality in the bush is understandable if we turn to
621 conditions of settlement: the scattered pattern of settlement is very obvious. There are no villages properly speaking, just a dusting of hamlets. In the Cameroons, the villages are very small, with an average of 230 inhabitants. Furthermore, we are dealing with units in a system of control: their village is divided into many hamlets of from 5 to 20 huts grouped around that of the family head /chef de famille/.

178 In Gabon, Fang leaders are worried about this crumbling apart of the
361 population and have issued slogans for regrouping the villages.
621 Amongst them, indeed, the scattering is perhaps even more marked.
[12] "The average number of inhabitants per village varies from 42 (territory of Mitzic) to 105 around Oyem and to nearly 138 in the Fang canton of Makokou." (1)

1. Balandier and Pauvert, Les villages gabonais /Gabonese Villages/, Mémoir, I.E.C.A. /Institut d'Études centrafricaines/, Brazzaville, 1952.

This is not the place for a study of whether scattered settlement is natural in a country where no centralized authority has been imposed, in which the only certain /37/ power was that of the family head, or whether, on the contrary, it evidences a new kind of anarchy, an intensified individualism. We shall merely point out that the
[184] hamlets are larger in Boulou country than in Ewôndo or Banê country, although the former political institutions of the Ewôndo and Banê seem to have given tribal chiefs some political powers and marks of rank, of which there seems to have been no question among the Boulou. The first appearance of centralized political power would seem to coincide with a greater dispersion in settlement.

The fact remains that no center of concentration forced any crystallization whatsoever of an amorphous mass. This fact, closely connected with the absence of trade, clearly indicates the new and artificial character of the towns. They are all of recent origin, and yet they have become a necessity.

463 but most of the artisans live in towns; there it is that they learned their trades, more easily find materials and tools, there also they believe the multitude will enable them to collect a large number of orders.

Certain crafts are long established, such as tailoring, masonry, and carpentry. But while Pahouin are numerous in the woodworking and building trades, as tailors they frequently have to compete with immigrants. New professions arise, often controlled by foreigners also—photographers, mattress makers, and mechanics. This brief list of the most widespread trades allows one to infer the rise in the standard of living: doors and windows, tables, chairs, wardrobes, beds, mattresses are now in quite general use.

319 166 The towns plan an essential role and are completely integrated into the country, since it is there that the rural people go to have the things made which they need. The mixed character of town populations is astonishing. Immigrants from all regions of the Cameroons or French Equatorial Africa give them a cosmopolitan character, while the bush has not sustained such a complex intermixture.

Nevertheless, we must not exaggerate the antithesis between country people and townsfolk: many countrymen have resided a few years in town and have kept up connections there. Migration away from centers was quite active thirty years ago, and certain Pahouin tribes were largely represented in the timber industry. There has been just as decided a movement toward the towns: "The development of cacao plantations along the Woleu-N'Tem by changing the living conditions of the villagers certainly seems to have been the principal cause of the halt in emigration in 1930." This remark by Sautter about the Fang is also true of the Boulou and —to a lesser degree, perhaps—of the Béti and assimilated tribes more closely pressed together in their habitat.

463 162 Béti, Boulou, or Fang form a petty bourgeoisie rather than a proletariat without resources. The following figures show the relatively small proportion of unskilled laborers (1):

1. M. Soret, Démographie et problèmes urbains en A.E.F. /Demography and Urban Problems in French Equatorial Africa/, I.F.A.N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noir/, 1954.

Occupational Distribution of Pahouin Emigrants in Douala

	Laborers	Artisans	Intellectual Occupations	Traders and Licensed Dealers
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Beti	37	55	1.9	6
Boulou		60	40	

A study of Dolisie, Baronga, and Poto-Poto makes it possible to establish similar facts for occupations (2). /39/

2. According to J. Guilbot, Petite étude sur la main-d'oeuvre à Douala /A Brief Study of Manpower at Douala/, I. F. A. N. /Institut Français d'Afrique Noir/, the Cameroons, 1947.

The proportion among them of persons who have education is about 40 percent and, what is even more important, that of the well-educated is relatively high.

Poto-Poto: Cultural Level of "Coastal Forest Dwellers"

Illiterates	Educated	Holders of the C.E.P.*	Holders of the "Brevet"
610	390	111	56

/*Certificat d'etudes primaires, certificate of primary education./

After spending some time in town, some emigrants return to their native villages, thus diminishing the separation between the two places. The bush folk, in turn, often come to the urban centers (1) and in

1. A set of figures gives the exact number of these trips: in 480 budgets relative to a total of 2, 000 persons, 1, 116 trips were listed (J. Binet, op. cit., p. 112).

such a case we gather that each principal town of a subdivision is a genuine center of attraction. Although new these towns are not artificial. There is another piece of evidence for this, the social-occupational distribution of the urban population is almost constant from one town to another, a proof that it corresponds to needs that are also constant.

Out of 100 inhabitants one generally finds: laborers 16.5, employees 12, traders 8.3, chauffeurs 6.9 (and "motor boys" 4.3), public service employees 6.7, domestic servants 5.8, carpenters 4.9, masons 4, farmers 3.5, tailors 3.2, mechanics 2.9, photographers 0.8, herders 0.5, catechists 0.1, without occupation 9, etc.

This in general outline is the present-day distribution. Let it simply be kept in mind that, with the diffusion of a new culture, the whole society becomes modified. The techniques and tools in use have been increased and diversified at the same time as social conditions.

Chapter 5

Social Organization

1. Forms of Settlement, Habitat

The basic social group is the patriarchal family (nda bot = lit., house of the people), to which corresponds the hamlet or elementary village, the jal (Boulou, pl. mal; Fang, Ewôndo, dzal), generally called by the name of the patriarch (ésa = father; ntôl = eldest, senior), but sometimes, when isolated, carrying a special toponym (éyôlé = proper name, designation; a person's name is rather jôé; Fang, édzoé). These mal are usually arranged into multifamily, sometimes multi-clan, villages, minlam (sing. nlam), the latter term designating both the group of dwellings and the soil appertaining to them. The nlam always has a place name of its own, which may refer to its geographical situation: nkôlayôp = on the hill; to a topographical or botanical peculiarity: ako'abete = dressed stone, ajap = the name of a tree, ma'an = crossroads; or to an incident connected with the founding: ébolewo'o (Ebolowa) = decayed chimpanzee, because the village was

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Distribution by Age

Age Group	Elected Municipal Councilors	Total Adult Male Population (1) (Nyong-and-Sanaga)
	Percent	Percent
20 to 30 years	9	26
30 to 40	33	29
40 to 50	37	28
Over 50	20	15

1. Evaluation made according to censuses established by the subdivisions; the documentation is not faultless but nevertheless is indicative.

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The figures given below for the whole population are not definitive, but as they have been taken from a recent complete census they may be considered good approximations.

Distribution of External Signs of Wealth
(for 100 persons)

	Masonry Houses	Bicycles	Automobiles
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Municipal councilors	27	50	11
Adult male population of Ebolowa	1.4	21	0.3

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Not for nothing do the Pahouin use the word nkukuma (rich) to designate a chief. The chosen leaders are the rich men. /133/

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A study of the matrimonial situation enables us to be more specific about the personal characteristics of elected men. Polygamy is much more common among them than among the population as a whole.